## **CLAIMS**

## What is claimed is:

A method for governing a supply chain consortium utilizing a network, 1. 1 comprising the acts of; determining an algorithm that is acceptable to each of a plurality of distributors/suppliers; 5 by establishing a contract requiring a supply chain manager to manage the distributors/suppliers utilizing the algorithm; 6 7 c) [0057 | selecting the distributors/suppliers for operating in the supply chain utilizing the [0075] algorithm and supply chain data gathered utilizing a network; and 8 9 d) allowing the supply chain manager to manage the supply chain utilizing the 10 supply chain data. 1 The method of claim 1, wherein the contract allows the supply chain manager to 2 deviate from the algorithm a predetermined amount.

- The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the supply chain manager includes tracking benchmark performance utilizing the supply chain data.
- The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the supply chain manager includes monitoring adherence to the contract utilizing the supply chain data.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the algorithm includes a least cost analysis.

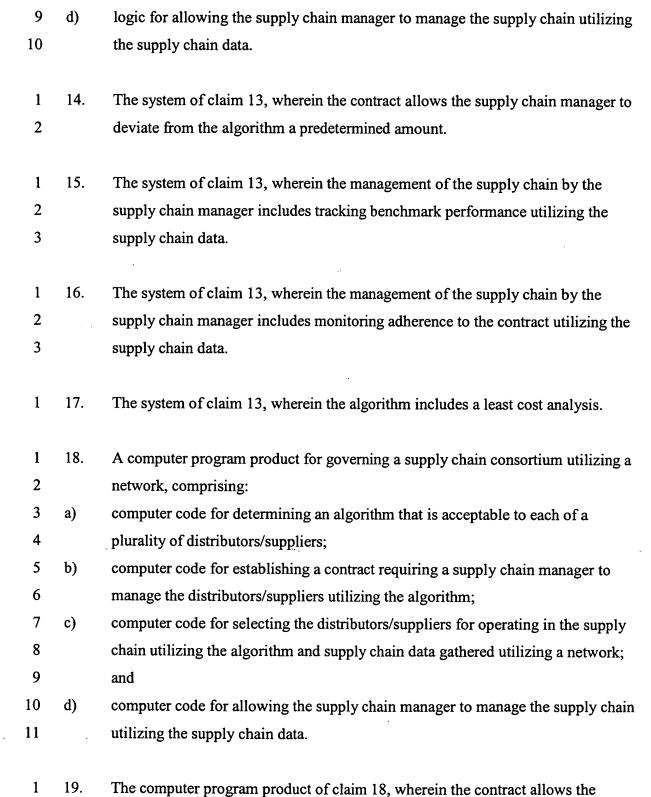




- 1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves entities selected
  2 from the group consisting of a price of product, a cost of shipping the product,
  3 and a cost of re-distribution of the product.
- The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves a price of product,

  a cost of shipping the product, and a cost of re-distribution of the product.
- 1 8. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis involves capacities of the
  2 distributors/suppliers and requirements of a plurality of outlets of the supply
  3 chain.
- 1 9. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis includes a tiered least cost analysis.
- 1 10. The method of claim 5, wherein the least cost analysis is standardized.
- The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the supply chain manager includes collecting profit information utilizing the supply chain data in real-time!
- The method of claim 1, wherein the management of the supply chain by the supply chain manager includes paying the selected distributors/suppliers/rebates.
- 1 13. A system for governing a supply chain consortium utilizing a network,
- 2 comprising:
- a) logic for determining an algorithm that is acceptable to each of a plurality of
- 4 distributors/suppliers;
- b) logic for establishing a contract requiring a supply chain manager to manage the
- 6 distributors/suppliers utilizing the algorithm;
- 7 c) logic for selecting the distributors/suppliers for operating in the supply chain
- 8 utilizing the algorithm and supply chain data gathered utilizing a network; and

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supply chain manager to deviate from the algorithm a predetermined amount.

- 1 20. The computer program product of claim 18, wherein the management of the
- 2 supply chain by the supply chain manager includes tracking benchmark
- 3 performance utilizing the supply chain data.